

Haslemere Urban District Council.

REPORT
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
1920.



HASLEMERE :

B. CHALFONT, THE GABLES PRESS, WEST STREET.

To the Urban District Council of Haslemere.

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health.

February 1921.

In presenting my Eighth Annual Report for the year 1920, I would call attention to two or three items of special interest.

The most noticeable event was a severe epidemic of poisoning with arsenic, seriously affecting a large number of inhabitants, in March and April, fortunately without fatal result.

The Housing question has progressed slowly but surely and an excellent site has been bought and laid out with roads, drainage etc. and the actual building is to commence early in the year. Fifty-five cottages are to be erected.

A Public Recreation Ground of eight acres has been presented to the Town as a War Memorial by Private Donations at a cost of £2,000 and an additional £300 to start laying out. It is to be under the management of the Urban District Council and should prove an inestimable benefit in years to come.

The comparative immunity from severe infectious epidemics has been very marked during the year.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The District comprises an area of about 2,263 acres, and is situated on the top of two Watersheds draining to the West into the Thames by the Wey River, and to the East into the Arun. The District is hilly, varying from 750 feet above sea level on the North and South, to 420 on the South West, and 375 on the North East. The soil varies from Lower Green Sand in the higher parts to Clay in the valley.

The District is mainly residential. The contour of it makes it impossible to drain the whole by one fall, and entails two systems of drainage, the larger taking the drainage

of Haslemere proper was made in 1899, and the smaller taking that of Grayswood in 1908. Both are by Bacterial Tanks and percolating filters.

The population was in the Census of 1911 returns 3,540, and may be fairly estimated in 1919 at 4,000.

RAINFALL.—The average rainfall is 36·33 inches. The rainfall for 1920 was 37·11 inches in 200 rain days.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

WATER SUPPLY.—The Main Supply is from the Watershed on Blackdown, the water being stored in two concrete reservoirs holding 500,000 gallons, enough for about eight days normal consumption. The water is pumped up from headings, and flows into the well at an average rate of 3,500 gallons per hour. With the growth of the town increasing difficulty has been found to secure an adequate supply ; and it has been found necessary during the year to supplement it by supplies from the Wey Valley Company. There is a secondary private supply to the houses on the Half Moon Estate. This Supply is ample, and analyses taken of it in the past few years have shown “a good supply for all dietetic purposes.”

DRAINAGE and SEWERAGE.—During the year various improvements to the main Sewage Disposal Works have been effected. The tankage available for continuous settlement has been increased by the conversion of two disused contact beds, a grit channel has been constructed, and provision has been made for the further treatment of storm water.

A very satisfactory effluent is being maintained and although periodical samples of the effluent have been taken by the Thames Conservancy, no complaints have been received from them. The sewage is treated by means of continuous settling tanks and revolving percolating filters and finally through humus tanks.

The Grayswood Works continue working satisfactorily.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.—During the year pressure has been brought to bear on all owners of privies and earth closets, to connect with the main drain where possible and a total of 19 pail closets and 5 privies has been converted into w.c.'s.

SCAVENGING.—House Refuse is mainly collected by the Council's cart, which also supplies sifted dry ashes to the earth closets every week. The house refuse was tipped and

burnt for part of the year in No. 3 field of the Sewage Works. During the latter part of the year, as the tip was getting full, a low lying field belonging to Mr. Glover in Shottermill, was utilized as a tip. This work as carried out, gives little cause for complaint.

The number of cesspools and privies visited during the year has been 70, and the number of pail closets 204. The latter are emptied twice a week, and from cesspools three loads are removed every three months.

In 1914 the numbers were respectively 125 and 288.

Moveable sanitary dustbins are used at all houses.

SANITARY INSPECTION of DISTRICT.—There are no common lodging houses in the District and one offensive trade.

During the year 164 inspections of houses were made. Seventy-six defects or nuisances were discovered, and as a result of recommendations sixty-five of these were remedied.

SCHOOLS.

The two public schools in the district are Church of England Schools. The Mixed School has accommodation for 300 scholars with an average of 246 on books (girls 126 ; boys 120). The Infants School has accommodation for 123 scholars with an average of 59 on books. In both schools the class-rooms are grouped round a central hall, and are commodious, lofty and well lit, warmed and ventilated.

The Schools have not been closed for illness and the general health has been very good.

FOOD.

MILK SUPPLY.—Sixteen inspections of cowsheds and dairies were made, and two defects discovered and remedied.

Frequent inspections of slaughter houses were made, and were found in all cases in good order.

Bakehouses were found in good order excepting in one case in which the bakehouse required limewashing, this was carried out immediately the occupier's attention was drawn to it.

ARSENICAL POISONING IN SUGAR.

On March 29th began a severe epidemic of cases of Arsenical Poisoning due to the contamination of a sack of brown sugar at a local grocer's. Within two days of the re-

port of the first case the sale was stopped, but unfortunately there were between March 29th and April 7th, over fifty cases more or less seriously affected, several people being very seriously ill. With the Ministry of Health's assistance the trouble was traced to weed killer leaking in a Railway van. In November an enquiry was held and a report presented by your Council. A full account of the cases appears elsewhere in a special report.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

All cases of infectious disease are, when necessary, sent to the Farnham Isolation Hospital under a special arrangement.

Disinfection of premises is carried out by contract under the supervision of myself and the Inspector. The system adopted is vapourized formaldehyde.

During the year nineteen cases of infectious disease were notified as Follows :—

Tuberculosis of Lungs	6
Pneumonia	2
Diphtheria	3
Scarlet Fever	2
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	2
Malaria	1
Erysipelas	1
Anterior Poliomyelitis	2

It was only necessary to treat four of these cases at the Farnham Isolation Hospital.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

The Centre is carried on jointly with Shottermill every Thursday afternoon at St. Christopher's Hall, under the management of Mrs. Allen Chandler, and is growing steadily in popularity. A very successful Baby Week was held, with a show of garments with prizes, address to mothers, and presentation of photographs of the babies, at which there was a crowded attendance of both babies and mothers and others interested.

HEALTH VISITOR'S REPORT FOR 1920.

First Visits to Infants under 12 months	61
Subsequent Visits to Children up to 5 years	383
Visits to Expectant Mothers	15
Attendances at Centre	
New Cases	65
Ante natal Cases	6
Other Attendances	794

It should be noted that for three months we were without the services of a nurse on Miss Arrowsmith's retirement.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

Infectious cases are treated at Farnham Isolation Hospital. Four cases in all were treated.

Bacteriological work is entrusted to the Clinical Research Association.

HOUSING.

The total number of houses is 871. The number of houses whose value in the Poor Rate is below £16, is 513.

During the year twenty houses (including one flat, and two houses of the Council's Housing Scheme) were commenced, by the end of the year nine of these were completed ready for occupation. A start was also made on the new roads of the High Lane Housing Site for fifty-three houses.

POPULATION.—Approximately 4,000. There is still a great demand for cottages, and cases have come across my notice where couples are delaying getting married because there is no house available. There is never a cottage to let in the town.

Overcrowding is not noticeable to any serious extent ; and as already pointed out, better than when many houses let rooms to relations of those in the camps ; but undoubtedly the fifty-five cottages to be erected shortly under the new Council Scheme will be occupied as fast as erected, in the main by employees at present unsuitably housed or living in other parishes. During the year one closing order was issued in the case of a house in an insanitary and defective condition.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The population for calculating birth and death rate is 3,871.

There was a total of 37 deaths, 14 males and 23 females giving a death rate of 9·558 per 1,000.

The total births were 82.

Males.	Legitimate	42	Total 44
	Illegitimate	2	
Females.	Legitimate	36	Total 38
	Illegitimate	2	

This gives a birth rate of 21·183 per 1,000.

Of deaths under one year there were 2 males and no females. No illegitimate children under one year died.

The Birth Rate for 1920 for the total population for England and Wales was 25·4 and the death rate 12·4.

Of causes of death :—

Civilians only	Males.	Females.
All causes	14.	23.
Influenza.	—	2.
Pulmonary tuberculosis.	—	1.
Cancer. malignant disease.	—	6.
Meningitis.	1.	—
Organic heart disease.	—	3.
Bronchitis.	1.	1.
Pneumonia (all forms).	2.	—
Cirrhosis of liver	—	1.
Nephritis and Bright's disease.	1.	1.
Congenital debility, &c.	1.	—
Violence, apart from suicide.	1.	—
Other defined diseases.	7.	8.
Special causes (included above)	—	—
Cerebro-Spinal fever.	—	—
Poliomyelitis.	—	—

APPENDICES.

HOUSING CONDITIONS

Statistics,

Year ended 31st December 1920.

1.—GENERAL.

[1].	Estimated population	-	-	4,000
[2].	General death rate	-	-	9.558
[3].	Death rate from tuberculosis	-	-	0.26
[4].	Infantile mortality	-	-	0.52
[5].	Number of dwelling houses of all classes	-	-	871
[6].	Number of working-class dwelling houses rated below £16	-	-	513
[7].	Number of new working-class houses erected	-	-	7

2.—UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES.

I.—Inspection.

[1].	Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts).	108
[2].	Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910.	24
[3].	Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation.	—
[4].	Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation.	76

II.—Remedy of Defects without service of Formal Notices.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers. - -

65

III.—Action under Statutory Powers.

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C. Proceedings under sections 17 and 18 of the Housing, Town Planning etc. Act, 1909.

[1]. Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders - - -

1

[2]. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made.

1